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When polarised feelings towards parties spread to voters: The role of ideological distance and social sorting in Spain

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ABSTRACT

Affective polarisation measured with feelings towards parties tends to overestimate the degree to which people dislike voters of opposing parties. This paper explores some of the factors that account for the gap between party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP). In particular, I first argue and show that the PAP-VAP gap increases with ideological distance between individuals and out-parties, although this difference begins to decrease after a certain level of ideological discrepancy is achieved. Second, social sorting increases the probability that individuals extend their antipathy towards parties to their voters, thus reducing the PAP-VAP gap. Third, whereas ideological distance leads to VAP among individuals with low levels of social sorting, it does not make a difference for socially sorted people. I discuss the relevance of these two factors by utilising the third wave of the E-DEM panel. The results have relevant implications for the consequences of affective polarisation.

1. Introduction

Affective polarisation generally refers to the extent to which partisans view opposing partisans negatively and copartisans positively (e.g. Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). In the United States (U.S.), scholars have employed different techniques to measure this type of polarisation, such as feeling thermometer questions in surveys that ask respondents to rate partisans or parties, social distance measures and behavioural or implicit measures (Iyengar et al., 2019). Outside the U.S., the majority of comparative studies capture this phenomenon using feeling thermometer questions towards parties. This is the most available measure in cross-country surveys (e.g. Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021; Ward and Tavits 2019), although there are other studies that use thermometer feelings towards voters, social distances measures and trust games (e.g. Helbling and Jungkunz 2020; Hobolt et al., 2020; Westwood et al., 2018).

However, when people evaluate political parties, they typically think in terms of elites more than voters. As has been found in a couple of experimental studies conducted in the U.S., whereas there is no significant difference between individuals' feelings for the opposing party and its candidates and elected officials, individuals generally have more positive feelings towards party supporters than they do towards the party itself and its candidates (Druckman and Levendusky 2019; Kingzette 2021). Similarly, recent research conducted in specific Western European countries shows that respondents' evaluations of partisans imperfectly correlate with evaluations of their respective parties (Harteveld 2021a; Knudsen 2021). Therefore, the use of feeling thermometer scales to express attitudes towards parties to measure affective polarisation tends to overestimate the degree to which people dislike ordinary voters of the opposing parties, which lies at the core of the definition of this type of polarisation.

Moreover, the specific mechanisms driving affective polarisation as well as its social and political implications may differ somewhat depending on the evaluated political object (Kingzette 2021). Whereas the polarisation of feelings about parties has a positive facet, in the sense that it spurs political interest and participation (e.g. Ward and Tavits 2019), the spread of partisan antipathy to ordinary voters has been argued to be more unequivocally related to a set of pernicious consequences related to social divisions and animosity (e.g. McCoy et al., 2018; McCoy and Somer 2019).

The study of the determinants of the gap between party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP), therefore, is relevant for both measurement and substantive reasons. Specifically, this paper explores some of the factors that explain when polarised feelings towards parties spread to their ordinary voters. In a recent study, Harteveld (2021a) empirically shows that the divergence

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between the two measures is associated with the features of some individuals, leading to the general conclusion that citizens for whom politics is more salient tend to extend their negative feelings about parties to their voters. Building on this research, in the following pages I consider the role of two factors: the ideological distance between citizens and their out-parties and social sorting, which refers to the alignment of different salient social identities (such as class, religion or ethnicity) along party lines.

I first argue that citizens' dislike is mainly focused on political parties and not so much on voters when the ideological distance is moderate. However, when the ideological distance is great, negative feelings towards voters of out-parties also increases substantially, in some cases reducing and even closing the PAP-VAP gap. Second, I contend, in line with previous research showing that social sorting fuels affective polarisation (e.g. Harteveld 2021b), that citizens whose social identities are aligned with their party preferences are more prone to extend their polarised feelings about parties to party supporters. And, third, I predict that ideological distance has a substantive impact on the PAP-VAP gap among people with low levels of social sorting, but not so much among socially sorted individuals. These expectations are demonstrated by utilising the third wave of an original online panel survey conducted in Spain between 2018 and 2019 (E-DEM), which includes both feelings towards parties and their voters (Torcal et al., 2020).

The empirical results suggest that PAP overestimates VAP to a greater extent when ideological polarisation is moderate and social sorting is low. In more substantive terms, the findings imply that maintaining ideological polarisation in intermediate levels (avoiding situations of extreme discrepancies) and, especially, preserving some levels of cross-cutting social and political identities among the population are crucial points in order to conserve the most positive implications of party affective polarisation and, simultaneously, prevent antipathy from spreading to the level of voters.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Affective polarisation towards parties and voters

The polarisation of feelings about parties has been found to be higher than those towards partisans. Iyengar et al. (2012), in their seminal article, compared differences in evaluations of parties with party supporters using two surveys of the American National Election Studies. The results showed that out-partisans were evaluated more favourably than the out-party itself, while the differences between in-party and in-partisan ratings were non-existent. The experimental studies conducted by Druckman and Levendusky (2019) and Kingzette (2021) in the U.S. also signalled that partisans' feelings towards voters of the opposing party were more positive than their feelings towards the opposing party itself and its candidates and elected officials. Knudsen (2021) compared affective polarisation towards parties (using a like-dislike scale) and voters (using the inter-party marriage measure) in Norway and the U.S., showing that differences between both countries are relevant in PAP but insignificant in VAP; hence, conclusions based on cross-country differences may depend on the measurement and the object of polarisation. In a study of the Netherlands, Harteveld (2021a) provides further evidence that respondents' dislike of parties and their partisans are only moderately correlated. Similarly, Torcal and Comellas (2022) show, in Spain, that affective polarisation is weaker when it is measured using feeling scales for voters than for party leaders.

These previous results can be understood in light of the 'person-positivity bias', according to which attitude objects that resemble individual human beings are evaluated more favourably than inanimate objects or grouped versions of the same individuals. This phenomenon has been demonstrated in assessments of public figures (Lau et al., 1979), politicians (Granberg and Holmberg 1990), immigrants (Iyengar et al., 2013) or gays and lesbians (McCabe 2019). Sears (1983) argued that perceived personhood similarity produces positive evaluations. Furthermore, additional research studies have suggested that the mere exposure to individuating information weakens the connections between an individual and the group she represents because perceptions become less reliant on stereotypes and more focused on attributes of the individual person (Iyengar et al., 2013, pp. 643–644). Miller and Felicio (1990) also observed that person-positivity bias occurs only when people evaluate others they dislike. The alleged reason is that 'sharing a status as an individual human being may be one of the few similarities between themselves and those being evaluated, whereas the group lacks even this minimal similarity' (Miller and Felicio 1990, p. 409). Beyond person-positivity bias, there could be some additional factors that explain why supporters of opposing parties are generally evaluated more favourably than their parties, such as widespread populist and anti-elitist attitudes among the population, or significant levels of political distrust (e.g. Kaltwasser and Van Hauwaert 2020; Torcal 2017).

The dislike between rank-and-file voters tends to be more strongly associated with negative social and political consequences than the polarisation of feelings towards parties. Specifically, the literature suggests that PAP may even have some positive implications for democracy: individuals holding highly polarised feelings about parties are prone to perceive that a lot is at stake in elections and that they can change politics at the ballot box, which leads them to participate in elections and in different forms of activism to a greater extent than the less polarised (e.g. Iyengar and Krupenkin, 2018; Serani, 2022; Wagner 2021; Ward and Tavits 2019). By contrast, the spread of negative feelings towards opposing parties to their ordinary supporters may have more unequivocally disturbing social and political implications: there is consistent evidence of its negative social and economic consequences (e.g. Huber and Malhotra 2017; McConnell et al., 2018) and some others have theorised about its negative political implications (such as the dehumanisation of opposing partisans, support for partisan violence or the erosion of political accountability and democratic norms), although empirical evidence is still scant, not conclusive and sometimes contradictory (e.g. Broockman et al., 2022; Kalmoe and Mason 2019; Martherus et al., 2021; McCoy and Somer 2019).

To the extent that some individuals are more likely than others to extend their antipathy towards opposing parties to party supporters, exploring the factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP is relevant for measurement reasons (to find out in which circumstances PAP overestimates VAP to a greater extent) but also for the studies that analyse the consequences of affective polarisation (given the more negative implications generally associated with VAP). Harteveld (2021a) explores this question in the Dutch case by showing that the part of the antipathy towards party voters that is not explained by affective evaluations of parties themselves is systematically related to a set of party-level and individual-level variables. On the one hand, supporters of the radical right appear to attract the highest levels of dislike, even when the relationship is controlled by party sympathy, suggesting that the antipathy towards parties of the radical right spills over to their partisans in a greater degree than the antipathy towards the rest of parties. On the other hand, those respondents with higher levels of ideological extremism and party identification tend to express higher levels of dislike towards partisans of out-parties, controlling for out-party sympathy.

Building on this existing research, in the sections that follow, I argue that ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties and social sorting are key factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP.

2.2. Ideological distance

According to belief congruence theory, prejudice is rooted in the assumption of dissimilarity in beliefs between oneself and out-group members (Bougher 2017).[1] Moreover, ideological polarisation among political elites raises the stakes of politics (as it increases the risk of having an extremist politician in government) and this in turn fuels partisan animosity. Congruently, different studies in the U.S. have found that the greater the ideological distance between an individual and the opposing party and its candidate, the less positive are the feelings held by the former towards the latter (e.g. Lelkes 2021; Webster and Abramowitz 2017). In multiparty systems, where citizens have multiple out-parties that can be evaluated with different degrees of antipathy, dislike towards out-parties and their partisans also increases with ideological distance (e.g. Harteveld 2021a; Westwood et al., 2018).

The effect of ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties on affective polarisation may differ depending on the evaluated political object and its levels of personhood (Sears 1983). According to the social psychology literature, when observers evaluate people's attributes, they tend to rely more on the specific properties of the individual than on the stereotypes or general properties of the group to which the person belongs (e.g. Krueger and Rothbart 1988). If this same logic is applied to judgements regarding political objects, it is expected that voters are viewed as partially disconnected from the party they support. Moreover, as mentioned above, person-positivity bias particularly applies when rating disliked groups (Miller and Felicio 1990). Thus, citizens' evaluations of out-voters would not be based only on the degree of the ideological discrepancy between themselves and voters' parties but also on perceived personhood similarities, which attenuate negative perceptions. As a result, ideological distance would fuel dislike towards out-parties to a greater degree than dislike towards the rank-and-file supporters of these parties. When the ideological discrepancies are very small, both the out-party and its supporters would be evaluated quite positively without great differences between them; nevertheless, out-parties would be evaluated significantly worse than their voters when the ideological distance is greater.

However, the person-positivity bias has been shown to have quite limited generalisability. As Nilsson and Ekehammar (1987) have argued, this bias is expected to appear only when the assumed similarity is based on the personhood dimension, but not when it is based on some other dimension, such as ideology. Thus, 'when the assumption of similarity is impossible (e.g. a communist subject evaluating a conservative person), there is no reason for expecting the bias, notwithstanding that the attitude object is a specific person' (Nilsson and Ekehammar 1987, p. 249). Although I have argued above that the person-positivity bias mainly applies for those out-parties that are ideologically far apart, I expect, based on Nilsson and Ekehammar's (1987) reasoning, that this bias is reduced when the ideological discrepancies are so great that the perceived personhood similarity between evaluators and out-parties' supporters is significantly attenuated. That is, after a certain level of ideological distance, the degree to which citizens distinguish supporters from their parties diminishes and partisans are increasingly evaluated based on the dimension of ideology, not personhood. Consequently, ideological distance is expected to fuel negative feelings for the voters of out-parties in an increasingly strong way.

To sum up, the PAP-VAP gap is predicted to follow a negative quadratic relationship with ideological distance: the difference between positive feelings for one's own party and out-parties (PAP) increases to a greater degree than the difference between feelings towards copartisans and opposing partisans (VAP) with ideological distance; however, at a certain level of distance, the PAP-VAP gap progressively decreases. The first set of hypotheses, hence, is the following:

H1a. The difference between PAP and VAP increases with a greater ideological distance with the evaluated out-party.

H1b. The difference between PAP and VAP begins to decrease after a certain level of ideological distance.

2.3. Social sorting

Whereas some scholars are focused on the ideological origins of affective polarisation, others argue that political and social identities are the main drivers of this type of polarisation (e.g. Huddy et al., 2015; Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Mason (2016; 2018a) shows, in the case of the U.S., that the increasing alignment of religious, racial and other political movement identities along party lines (what she calls 'social sorting') has generated an increasing affectively polarised electorate by strengthening both in-group attachment and out-group dislike. Moreover, the analyses reveal that the *cumulative* relationship between social identities and partisan identities creates a psychologically durable partisan social identity that acts as 'a tribe' that binds all social and political identities together (Mason and Wronski 2018, p.274). This research is built on classical works about how cross-cutting social divisions mitigate social and political conflict (e.g. Lipset 1960), as well as on previous research in the field of social psychology showing that individuals with highly aligned identities tend to be more intolerant towards out-group members (e.g. Roccas and Brewer 2002).

In comparative perspective, Harteveld (2021b) empirically demonstrates that social sorting is associated with the polarisation of feelings about parties around the globe. As argued by the author, the alignment of political with non-political identities is a characteristic of politics around the world, although 'the degree and content of alignment differs between and within world regions' (Harteveld 2021b, p. 3). In Western Europe, the central/periphery, state/church, urban/rural and, especially, workers/employer divisions gave rise to durable cleavages that structured party competition (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), although the association of most of these social divisions with vote choice has progressively declined due to socioeconomic, cultural and political transformations (e.g. Angelucci and Vittori 2021). Some scholars show that a new cleavage opposing the winners and loser of globalisation that cut across the left-right divide has been developed, and that education is a key factor identifying both groups. This new cleavage has increasingly structured party competition in Northern-Western Europe, but not so much in most Southern European countries, such as Spain, Portugal or Greece (e.g. Kriesi et al., 2008).

I sustain that social sorting is a key factor predicting which citizens are more likely than others to extend the antipathy they feel towards parties to their supporters. Those citizens whose different social identities are aligned (or perceived to be aligned) with their partisan identity develop strong 'tribal' attachment to their party and copartisans (Mason and Wronski 2018) and are less able to engage with their partisan opponents. Moreover, these citizens also tend to exaggerate differences between groups and invent grievances and conflicts (Mason 2018a). Therefore, they may tend to extend their highly polarised affective evaluations of parties to the voters who belong to those political groups. By contrast, cross-pressured citizens whose partisan identity does not match most of their other social identities (or who do not perceive the cumulative alignment of their social and partisan identities) are more able to engage socially with their fellow citizens and partisan opponents and, hence, are presumed to view partisan confrontations as largely confined to the institutional and political sphere. That is, less socially sorted citizens, although they may develop some level of antipathy towards political parties (due to, for example, ideological discrepancies), are much less likely to project their feelings about parties to the ordinary

[1] It is relevant to note that although prejudice and dislike generally tend to be equated, they are not interchangeable concepts: in some contexts dislike does not have implications for tolerance (e.g. Verkuyten et al., 2019), and sympathy towards an out-group may be compatible with prejudiced attitudes and behaviours towards that group (e.g. Glick and Fiske 2001).

people supporting them.

If these expectations are true, it would be observed that, controlling for other relevant drivers of affective polarisation, the net association of social sorting with PAP is weaker than with VAP, so that the gap between PAP and VAP is smaller among the most socially sorted individuals. The second hypothesis, hence, is the following:

H2. The difference between PAP and VAP decreases as social sorting becomes greater.

Social sorting may also condition the effect of ideological distance on the gap between PAP and VAP. As previously argued, intermediate levels of ideological distance between individuals and their out-parties are associated with higher levels of antipathy towards parties than towards their voters due to the person-positivity bias. In contrast, when the ideological distance is very large, the assumption of personhood affinity is less plausible and negative feelings for parties spill over to voters, in which case the PAP-VAP gap is smaller. However, highly socially sorted citizens, who tend to engage less with out-group members and are less tolerant towards them (Roccas and Brewer 2002), may differentiate the party from its rank-and-file members to a lesser degree, regardless of ideological similarity. Moreover, socially sorted people may tend to exaggerate the ideological distance between themselves and out-parties (Mason 2018a), which may lead them to extend the antipathy towards parties to their voters even if the real distance is only moderate. Therefore, the impact of ideological distance on out-group antipathy may be quite similar for both parties and voters among socially sorted individuals. Conversely, citizens who present low levels of social sorting and, hence, tend to be more cross-pressured in their social and political identities and develop more tolerant views towards out-group members, may be unsympathetic only towards voters of out-parties that are located at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum, and likely to a lesser degree than citizens with higher levels of social sorting. Therefore, the third hypothesis is as follows:

H3. The effect of ideological distance on the difference between PAP and VAP is weaker when social sorting is greater.

3. Data and case study

3.1. Dataset

To test the previous hypotheses, I utilise the Spanish E-DEM dataset (for details, see Torcal et al., 2020).[2] Although the dataset is comprised of a four-wave online panel survey of the Spanish voting age population conducted between October 2018 and May 2019, I use the third wave of the panel because it is the only one that contains all the necessary variables for the analysis, including feeling for parties and their voters. Specifically, the selected wave was implemented just before the Spanish general elections held on April 28, 2019.

3.2. Case study

Spain constitutes a suitable case study for the purposes of the paper. First, Spain presents high levels of affective polarisation in a comparative perspective (Gidron et al., 2020), and this dynamic has followed an (irregular) upward trend over the last three decades (Torcal and Comellas 2022). Second, the Spanish political party system has experienced a deep transformation during the last decade, changing from an imperfect bipartisan model to the current multiparty system (Rama et al., 2021). This period has been characterised by the surge of new (left and right-wing) radical parties and the increase of ideological polarisation (e.g. Rodríguez-Teruel 2020). Current Spanish political parties cover all the main ideological families: the radical left (*Unidas Podemos*, UP), social democracy (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, PSOE), liberalism (*Ciudadanos*, Cs), conservatism (*Partido Popular*, PP) and the radical right (VOX). The Spanish case, hence, allows a proper exploration of how different levels of ideological distance between respondents and out-parties impact PAP and VAP.

Third, Spain is characterised by the superposition of different salient cleavages and social identities. The most relevant historical cleavages in Spain are social class, religiosity and territorial identity (Linz and Montero 1999). Since the Spanish transition to democracy in the late 1970's, several studies have explored the importance of these divisions in the Spanish electoral competition. Most of them focus on the first three decades of the democratic period, which were characterised by competition between PSOE and PP (formerly *Alianza Popular*, AP). With respect to social class, there is a significant class pattern in Spanish voting behaviour, although its overall impact is modest and has followed an irregular downward trend since it peaked in 1982. Similar to other Western countries, AP/PP has tended to obtain, compared to the PSOE, more support from highly educated people, top-income earners and professionals and the self-employed (e.g. Bauluz et al., 2021; Orriols 2013).

Religiosity has also played a significant role in shaping voting behaviour: the non-religious voters have always supported the left, while practising Catholics have tended to vote for AP/PP. Nevertheless, scholars generally agree that religious conflict has not been central to Spanish democracy due to the process of secularisation and the moderation of the elites (e.g. Calvo and Montero, 2002; Orriols 2013). Finally, the territorial cleavage was accommodated in the new democracy by a process of political decentralisation that led to the development of distinct sub-national political arenas with the presence of strong nationalist parties, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country. Moreover, while regional identities tend to be associated with the left, the Spanish nationalism is more closely linked to the right (e.g. Dinas 2012; Pallarés and Keating, 2003).

Furthermore, these cleavages may have gained salience during the tumultuous last decade. First, the surge of the radical left Podemos and the centre-right Cs in the aftermath of the Great Recession was the result of a reinvigorated economic dimension (characterised by the conflict over austerity policies) and, at the same time, a crisis of political representation that was also the expression of a generational divide: young people critical of the political system were more likely to vote for Podemos and Cs, each on different sides of the ideological spectrum (Hutter et al., 2018; Vidal 2018). Second, the centre-periphery division has gained a strong prominence in recent years with the Catalan territorial conflict, which facilitated the electoral surge of the radical right and Spanish nationalist VOX (e.g. Rodon 2020). Third, moral and religious-related conflicts have also been partially reactivated during the last two decades with the conservative opposition to the approval of progressive laws related to social issues such as same-sex marriage or abortion (e.g. Orriols 2013). Finally, the emergence of VOX could lead to the development of the globalisation divide, although this party has mainly attracted the support of voter with high economic status and relatively high levels of education (e.g. Turnbull-Dugarte et al., 2020).

3.3. Operationalisation

Feelings for the principal Spanish political parties (PSOE, PP, Cs, UP and VOX) were measured in eleven-point like-dislike scales ranging from 'I don't like it at all' to 'I like it very much'. Sentiments for their voters were captured by ordinal scales with the following values: 0 ('unfavourable feelings'), 15, 30, 40, 50 ('no feelings'), 60, 70, 85 and 100 ('favourable feelings').[3] For the sake of comparability, I have re-

[2] Data available at: https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/6bt6r8cn2r/3.

[3] This ordinal variable differs from the classic feelings thermometer in which respondents can choose any number between 0 and 100. This constitutes a design error of the E-DEM survey that, however, I believe does not invalidate the analysis carried out in the present study.

codified the latter scales to also range from 0 to 10. Respondents were classified in the different partisan groups first based on reported party identification. Then, those respondents who were not identified with any of the main Spanish parties were classified based on their reported vote intention for the April general elections. Finally, I utilised the probabilities to vote scores (PTVs), which range from 0 ('not likely') to 10 ('very likely'), by assigning respondents without a group to their highest PTV, with the condition that the latter must be equal or higher than 5 scores out of 10. The remaining respondents who could not be attributed to any partisan group (around the 26.2% of respondents) were not considered in the analyses.[4] Specifically, there are 368 respondents classified as PSOE partisans, 355 as UP supporters, 262 as Cs partisans, 123 as VOX partisans and, finally, 117 as PP supporters.[5] See the average ideological self-placement of the different groups of partisans in the Appendix (Figure A1).

The dataset is stacked by out-party, so each observation is a respondent by an out-party 'dyad'. I employ three different dependent variables in the models. PAP was measured as the difference between the like score for the in-party and the like score for each of the various out-parties. In the same way, VAP was obtained by calculating the difference between the feeling score for the voters of the in-party and the feeling score for each of the voters of the different out-parties. Both PAP and VAP range from −10 to 10, where positive values indicate that respondents evaluated their own group higher than the other group and negative values correspond to (the very few) respondents who assessed their group worse than the out-group. Finally, the difference between PAP and VAP is also used to test whether the effect of the different independent variables on the PAP-VAP gap is statistically significant or not.

The first key independent variable, measured at the respondent–out-party level, is ideological distance, which was obtained by calculating the absolute difference between a respondent's ideological self-placement (measured on an eleven-point scale) and the ideological position of each evaluated out-party according to the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019 (also measured on an eleven-point scale) (Jolly et al., 2022). As it is shown in the Appendix, the ideological position of parties based on the CHEP is very similar to the average position attributed to parties by survey respondents (Figure A2). I use an 'objective' measure of ideological distance for two main reasons. First, affective polarisation is known to boost perceived (elite) ideological polarisation (Armaly and Enders 2021); hence, the use of a measure that does not depend on respondents' perceptions should help mitigate this endogeneity problem. Second, and as I explained above, social sorting may overestimate perceptions of ideological distance, which in turn may lead to VAP even if the real distance is only moderate. Hence, it is more appropriate to use an 'objective' measure rather than a subjective one to test H3.

The second key independent variable, measured at the respondent level, is social sorting. Inspired by Harteveld (2021b, p. 8), I calculate social sorting as the extent to which a respondent's party preference can be successfully predicted by sociodemographic and identity-related variables. First, I estimated a model for each party for which I predicted the probability that the party was the preferred one (that is, the in-party) by a different set of variables capturing the main Spanish cleavages and social identities. The traditional class or economic divide is approximately captured by income, economic uncertainty and involvement with labour unions; the religiosity cleavage is captured by religious membership and church attendance; and the territorial divide is approximated by regions and two scales that ask respondents about their level of identification with, respectively, their region and Spain. I also included in the models sex, age groups (which reflect the generational divide) and education level (which is related to social class and the division of globalisation's winners and losers) (see the Appendix for a detailed explanation of the selected variables). I then estimated, for each respondent, her residual according to this model.[6] The larger the absolute residual, the worse the respondent fits the sociodemographic and identity composition of a party. Finally, the social sorting variable was obtained by calculating the respondent's average absolute residual and then subtracting 1. The greater the score (that is, closer to 1), the more socially sorted is the respondent.

This measure has some caveats (see also Harteveld 2021b). The first is that the different social identities are only indirectly captured by 'objective' sociodemographic measures; only citizens' subjective territorial identities are directly assessed. A possible consequence of this is that the social sorting variable may, to a greater degree, reflect the alignment of these territorial identities along party lines. A second limitation is that this measure assumes that respondents are aware of how the different sociodemographic factors and social identities are aligned with political parties.

Different control variables at the respondent level, which are plausibly correlated with both affective polarisation and social sorting based on previous literature, are selected: party identification, ideological groups, political interest and basic sociodemographic variables (sex, age groups and education level) (for more detailed information on control variables, see the Appendix). Basic descriptive statistics of the variables are included in the Appendix (Table A1).

4. Results

First of all, it is interesting to compare the polarisation of feelings for parties and their voters in Spain. Fig. 1 shows that the average like score for the in-party (7.82) was very similar to the average like score for the voters of their own party (7.71). However, and in line with previous findings, another picture emerges when evaluations of out-parties and their voters are compared. The out-group like was obtained by calcu-

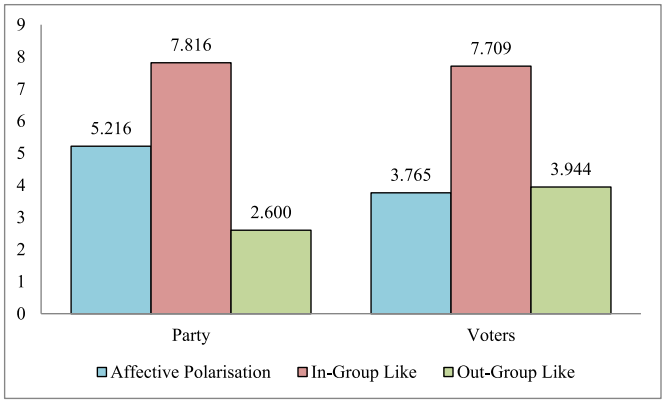


Fig. 1. Mean levels of affective polarisation, in-group like and out-group like, by political object: party and voters.

[4] This definition of in-parties allows me to compare the affective evaluations of parties and their voters. Wagner (2021) alternatively defines in-parties as the most-liked party (that is, the party to which the respondent attributes his/her highest like score). However, Wagner's definition is not appropriate for the present paper because it would imply to define in-parties based on one of the two feeling scales that I aim to compare.

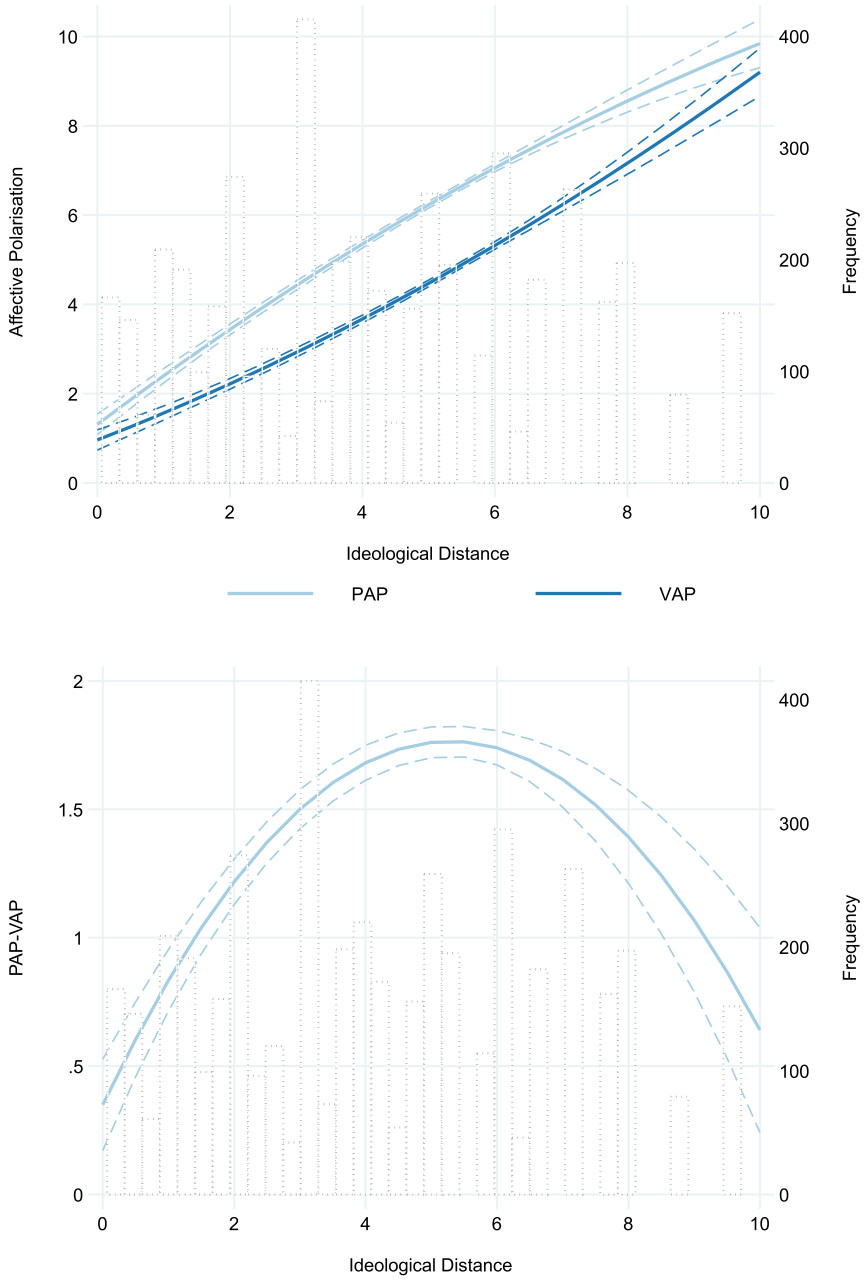
[5] It should be noted that, compared to the results of the April general elections, the sample has a significant left-wing bias: while UP supporters are clearly overrepresented, PP partisans are underrepresented. This bias informs of the need to be somewhat cautious with the extrapolation of the results to the whole of the Spanish partisans.

[6] Following Harteveld (2021b), the residual was calculated based on OLS regression models (rather than logistic ones) to obtain continuous residuals.

lating the respondent's mean feelings towards her out-groups, weighting each out-group by its size (that is, the proportion of votes obtained in the April 2019 general elections). As observed in Fig. 1, Spanish respondents, on average, evaluated the other parties much worse than their supporters; specifically, the average out-party like (2.60) was approximately 1.34 points lower than the average out-voters like (3.94). As a result, the average affective polarisation (that is, the difference between in-group like and out-group like) was approximately 1.45 points higher for parties (5.22) than for partisans (3.77). At the respondent level, the correlation between the polarisation of feelings about parties and partisans is far from perfect ($r = 0.58$).

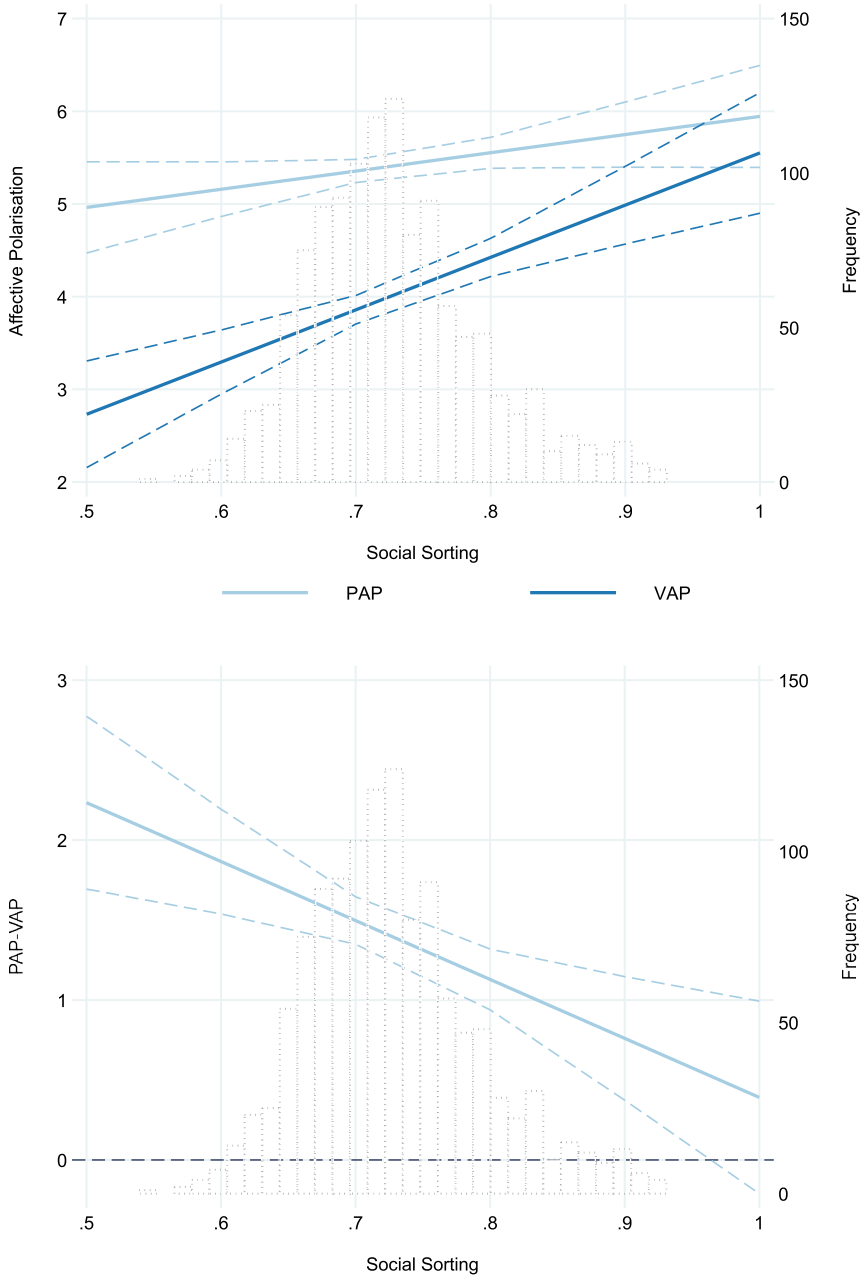
What are the average feelings of partisans towards their own party/group of voters and the other parties/groups of voters? In the Appendix, I report two like-dislike matrices showing these descriptive results (Figures A3 and A4). The first interesting finding is that UP and VOX partisans are the ones who exhibit more positive sentiments towards the own party and its voters. Regarding the evaluation of out-groups, a clear bipolar affective structure is identified: partisans show neutral feelings or even weak sympathy towards the other parties of the own ideological bloc and their voters and a fairly strong antipathy towards parties and voters of the other bloc. Cs partisans represent a partial exception since they tend to evaluate PSOE and its voters better than VOX and its supporters (although UP and its voters are the most unsympathetic out-group for them).

Turning to the hypotheses, I stack the dataset by out-party, so that each respondent appears once for each out-party she evaluated. To test



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A2.

Fig. 2. Within-respondent predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance between respondents and out-parties.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A3.

Fig. 3. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting.

H1a and H1b, I perform three different linear regression models with, respectively, PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP as the dependent variables. Ideological distance and ideological distance squared are the key independent variables. Out-party dummies are also included to control for the fact that some parties may attract more dislike than others. Given that I am not interested in analysing the effect of any variable at the respondent level for testing H1a and H1b, I include respondent fixed effects in the main models. In this way, the models control for between-respondent factors, and the relationships of ideological distance with the different dependent variables are explored with within-respondents. This means that the effect of ideological distance on PAP and VAP is only accountable to their out-group like-dislike component. Finally, standard errors are clustered by respondent. It is worth noting that I cannot claim causality in the findings obtained, as there could be some unobserved within-individual factors that may affect the relationships explored and affective polarisation could also exert a reverse effect on respondents' ideology. Hence, the analysis has a fundamentally exploratory nature.

Fig. 2 graphically represents the within-respondent predicted levels of PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP by different levels of ideological distance (see Table A2 in the Appendix for the regression results). The results confirm H1a and H1b. As it is observed in the top graph, the affective distance between their own party and the evaluated out-party strongly increases with ideological distance. Interestingly, the relationship exhibits significant diminishing returns. By contrast, and congruent with the expectations, VAP follows a significant positive quadratic relationship with ideological distance: the difference between positive feelings towards copartisans and partisans of the other party increases with ideological distance in an increasingly strong way.

Consequently, and as is shown in the bottom graph of Fig. 2, the gap between PAP and VAP significantly increases until intermediate levels of ideological distance, to decrease again when the distance becomes larger. For example, PAP is predicted to be approximately 0.60 points higher than VAP when the ideological distance between the respondent and the evaluated out-party is only 0.5 points; when the evaluated out-party is 5 points away from the respondent, however, the gap between PAP and VAP reaches 1.76 points; finally, the difference between PAP and VAP decreases to 0.87 points when the ideological distance is 9.5 points. Hence, the results suggest that negative feelings towards out-groups are much more focused on parties than on their voters when ideological discrepancies are intermediate, but that the negative evaluations extend to partisans to a greater degree when the ideological differences are high.

Regarding the out-party dummies included in the models, the results interestingly show that the antipathy attracted by the radical right party VOX spills over onto its voters to a greater degree than the antipathy attracted by the other parties (see Figure A5 in the Appendix). When the out-party is not VOX, the PAP-VAP gap ranges from 1.32 (Cs) to 1.72 (PSOE) points, and the affective distance between their own party and VOX is only 1.06 points higher than the affective distance between copartisans and VOX supporters. This finding is consistent with the fact that the nativist and exclusionary positions defended by radical right parties attract the highest levels of negative partisanship among the electorate (e.g. Meléndez and Kaltwasser 2021), and is similar to the results obtained by Harteveld (2021a) for the Dutch case.

To test H2, which refers to social sorting, I need to introduce independent variables at the level of respondents. Consequently, I conduct linear random intercept models with respondent–out-parties nested in respondents. The dependent variables are the same as before (PAP, VAP, PAP-VAP), and the key independent variable is social sorting. The different control variables described above, measured at the respondent level, are introduced in the models, together with ideological distance and ideological distance squared at the respondent–out-party level. Out-party dummies are also included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Again, the analysis is basically exploratory, since I cannot claim causality in the findings.

Fig. 3 graphically represents the predicted levels of PAP, VAP and PAP-VAP by levels of social sorting (see Table A3 in the Appendix for the regression results). As can be observed in the top graph, PAP increases with social sorting, although the positive relationship is weak and only significant at a confidence level of 90%. If control variables are considered, PAP appears to be mainly fuelled by other factors, particularly ideological distance and party identification. In contrast, social sorting is strongly and significantly associated with VAP. Whereas those respondents with low levels of social sorting (who are located in the fifth percentile in the social sorting scale) have a predicted difference between their feelings towards copartisans and out-partisans of 3.49 points, socially sorted respondents (those who are located at the 95th percentile in the social sorting scale) have a predicted VAP of 4.71 points. Consequently, and as shown in the bottom graph, the gap between PAP and VAP significantly decreases with social sorting: whereas PAP is predicted to be approximately 1.74 points higher than VAP among respondents with low levels of social sorting, this difference is of only 0.94 points among socially sorted respondents. The results, therefore, support H2.

It is also worth noting that these multilevel models also support H1a and H1b (see Figure A6 in the Appendix), so that the results presented in Fig. 2 are robust to an alternative model specification.

The moderating effect of social sorting on the relationship between ideological distance and the PAP-VAP gap, established in H3, is explored by conducting a three-way interaction between ideological distance, ideological distance and social sorting, that is, I introduce two interaction terms—'ideological distance x social sorting' and 'ideological distance squared x social sorting'—to the previous multilevel model.

Fig. 4 displays the predicted levels of PAP and VAP across different levels of ideological distance for those respondents who present poor social sorting (that is, who are located at the fifth percentile in the social sorting scale, as shown in the top graph) and those who are highly socially sorted (who are located at the 95th percentile, as shown in the bottom graph) (see Models 1 and 2 in Table A4 in the Appendix). Congruent with expectations, the positive quadratic relationship between ideological distance and VAP is only present among poorly sorted respondents, whereas ideology is linearly associated with VAP among socially sorted respondents. On the other hand, the relationship between ideological distance and PAP does not appear to be substantially conditioned by social sorting.

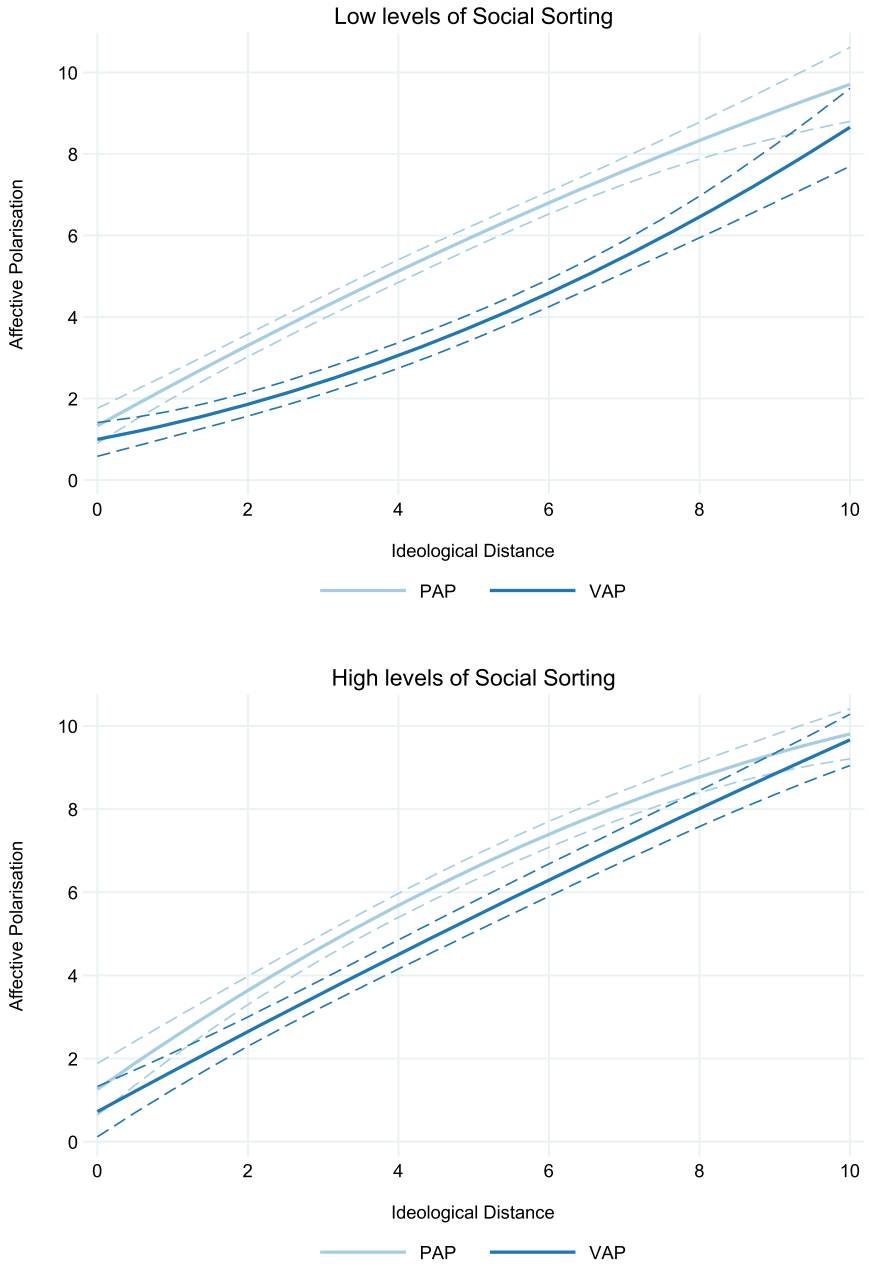
I also graphically represent the predicted difference between PAP and VAP by ideological distance and social sorting in Fig. 5 (see Model 3 in Table A4 in the Appendix). The results show that the PAP-VAP gap for intermediate levels of ideological distance is significantly lower when the levels of social sorting are high. For example, when the distance between an individual and an out-party is 5 points, PAP is approximately 2.20 points higher than VAP among less socially sorted respondents, while this difference is of only 1.17 points among socially sorted respondents. To put it in a more substantive way, the results suggest that those citizens whose social identities are aligned along party lines tend to expand their out-party dislike to the ordinary voters who belong to that party, even if the ideological distance is moderate. The graph also shows that the PAP-VAP gap diminishes with high levels of ideological distance among poorly socially sorted respondents, although it continues to be somewhat higher than among the most socially sorted.

4.1. Robustness checks and extensions

Some robustness checks and additional analyses have been implemented. First, I have retested H1a and H1b by measuring ideological distance with an ordinal variable. Specifically, I have grouped the values of the ideological distance scale into the following ten ordered categories: (0–1], (1–2], (2–3], (3–4], (4–5], (5–6], (6–7], (7–8], (8–9] and (9–9.7]. Dummies for each category of ideological distance (with the first, '(0–1]', as the reference category) are included in the models as key independent variables rather than the ideological distance scale and the ideological distance scale squared. The results are similar to those of the main models and are congruent with theoretical expectations (see Table A5 and Figure A7 in the Appendix).

Second, research shows that political alignment along territorial and religious dimensions fuels affective polarisation to a greater extent than along education or income (Harteveld 2021b), and that ethnic-based political divisions are a strong predictor of partisan antipathy (Bradley and Chauchard 2022). Taking into account the salience of the territorial cleavage in Spain, I checked whether the previous results are mainly driven by factors included in the calculation of the social sorting variable that capture the territorial divide. Specifically, I estimated two different measures of social sorting: one using only factors related to territorial identity (regions and regional and Spanish identification scales) and another using the rest of socio-demographic factors capturing the other social divides. The results show that both social sorting measures are negatively related to the PAP-VAP gap, but that this relationship is only substantive and significant for the territorial divide (see Tables A6 and A7, and Figures A8 and A9, in the Appendix). Nevertheless, these results should be taken with caution, since they may be due in part to the fact that only the territorial divide is measured with subjective measures.

Third, it is assumed that the effects of social sorting described in H2 and H3 are explained in part by its capacity to inflate people's perceived ideological distance in relation to their out-partisan groups. It is relevant, thus, to check to what extent social sorting is capable of



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1 and 2 in Table A4.

Fig. 4. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP) and voter affective polarisation (VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting.

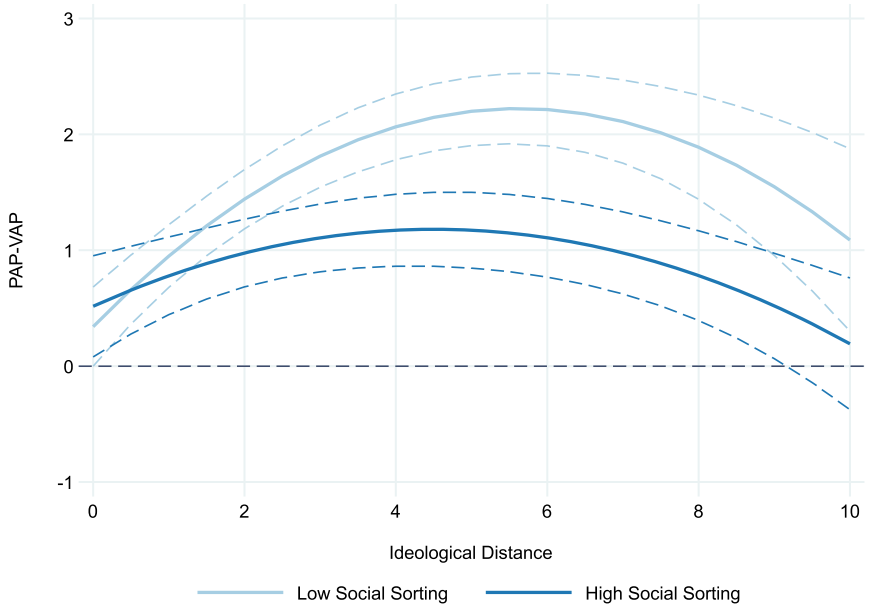
exaggerating ideological differences. To do so, I first constructed a subjective measure of ideological distance by calculating the absolute difference between a respondent's ideological self-placement and the ideological position of each evaluated out-party according to the respondent's perceptions.[7] Second, I created a new variable that measures the difference between the perceived and the 'objective' distance, so that positive values indicate that the distance is overestimated and negative values indicate that it is underestimated. Finally, I performed a multilevel model with the latter as the dependent variable and social sorting as the key independent variable.[8] The results show, as expected, that socially sorted people are significantly more likely to inflate perceptions of ideological distance than poorly sorted people (see Table A8 and Figure A10, in the Appendix).

5. Conclusions

This paper contributes to the literature on affective polarisation by exploring some factors that account for the gap between PAP and VAP. I

[7] The correlation coefficient between this measure and the 'objective' one used in the main analysis is of 0.85.

[8] The model includes, as controls, party identification, ideological groups, political interest, sex, age groups, education levels and out-party dummies.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A4.

Fig. 5. Predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voter affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by ideological distance and levels of social sorting.

analyse whether the ideological distance between citizens and their out-parties, as well as the alignment of social identities along party lines (social sorting), predicts the extent to which citizens extend their polarised feelings about parties to voters. This is explored in the case of Spain.

The empirical results show, first, that when the ideological distance between an individual and an evaluated out-party is intermediate, the affective distance between the in-partisan like and out-partisan like remains modest and much weaker than the affective distance between the in-party like and out-party like. Only when the ideological distance begins to be high are the negative feelings towards out-parties extended to a greater degree to their supporters, significantly decreasing the PAP-VAP gap. Second, the empirical results show that individuals with low levels of social sorting (that is, respondents whose party preferences are poorly predicted by sociodemographic and identity-related variables capturing the main social cleavages) hold much higher levels of PAP than of VAP, whereas socially sorted Spaniards are much more polarised in their feelings towards voters, reaching levels similar to those of party affective polarisation. Finally, the empirical analysis suggests that socially sorted individuals, compared to those with more cross-cutting identities, tend to extend their negative evaluations of out-parties to ordinary voters even when out-parties are only moderately distant from them in ideological terms.

These results have relevant implications for the measurement of affective polarisation: the use of thermometer feelings towards parties in most comparative studies tends to overestimate the level of inter-partisan antipathies to a greater extent when ideological discrepancies are moderate and, especially, among individuals with low levels of social sorting. The findings are also relevant in substantive terms: the containment of ideological polarisation within intermediate levels, as well as the preservation of cross-cutting social and political identities among the population, appears to be crucial to preventing antipathy from spreading beyond political parties and spilling over to rank-and-file supporters. This is interesting in light of the potential disturbing social and political consequences of political polarisation when it takes the form of increasing dislike between ordinary citizens who belong to different political poles (e.g. McCoy et al., 2018; McCoy and Somer 2019).

How to preserve some of the benefits usually associated with polarisation (e.g. clarification of the different political positions, higher levels of political participation) at the same time that dislike between ordinary voters is contained? Regarding ideology, some studies show that citizens are increasingly divided not so much by disagreements over concrete issues, but mainly in identity terms (e.g. Mason 2018b). Placing more emphasis on specific policy issues in political debates and leaving aside the more purely identitarian ideological discussions, hence, might help prevent high level of VAP. (e.g. Miller 2020). Concerning social sorting, Levendusky (2018) interestingly finds that priming American national identity reduces affective polarisation in broad sectors of American society, across lines of partisan strength, ethnicity and gender. To what extent, and in what way, this finding can be adapted to plurinational countries such as Spain is debatable. Other aspects that could help preserve some 'common ground' in society could be the adoption of more consensual institutions and proportional voting systems that disperse the political power among multiple parties, encourage cooperation and avoid zero-sum political situations; and/or the adoption of redistributive economic policies that strength social cohesion (e.g. Gidron et al., 2020).

This paper has some limitations. First, the cross-sectional analyses conducted here constitute an exploration of some possible causes of the PAP-VAP gap at the individual level that should be tested in the future with experimental and longitudinal research designs. Second, the present analysis is restricted to the Spanish context, raising questions about the external validity of the results. In this sense, there are some similarities between the findings obtained in the present paper for Spain and those obtained by Harteveld (2021a) for the Netherlands, a country characterised by lower levels of affective polarisation and some relevant differences regarding societal divides. Third, the social sorting measure, although a good proxy of this phenomenon, has different relevant caveats already mentioned above. Thus, future comparative research should develop more precise indices, including variables that directly measure the different sets of salient social identities as well as the extent to which respondents are aware of how these social identities are aligned with party affiliations. Finally, we need to better understand the factors driving social sorting, as well as its social and political consequences.

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Declaration of competing interest

None.

Data availability

The E-DEM dataset used in this paper is available at https://data.mendeley.com/datasets/6bt6r8cn2r/3. For more details on this dataset, see Torcal et al. (2020). Replication syntax for the analyses reported in the paper is available at osf.io/ta84r. Further inquiries can be directed to the author.

Aknowledgements

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Appendix

1 Independent variables for measuring social sorting

Sex. 1 means female and 0 means male.

Age. I have created five dummies, each of which refers to a different age group: 18–24; 25–34; 35–44; 45–54; 55 or more.

Education level. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different education group: lower secondary or less; upper secondary or 3 years Bachelor; 5 years Bachelor or higher.

Income. Total household income after taxes (monthly), with ten categories: 780€ or less; 781€-1000€; 1001€-1250€; 1251€-1500€; 1501€-1800€; 1801€-2200€; 2201€-2500€; 2501€-2850€; 2851€-3700€; 3701€ or more.

Economic uncertainty. I have created an index obtained through the average of four items which measure the respondent's concern about: 1) bills, 2) reducing lifestyle, 3) getting a job, and 4) loans and mortgages. Each item contains four categories: not at all concerned; barely concerned; quite concerned; very much concerned.

Involvement with labour unions. I have created a dummy variable whose value 1 refers to those respondents who have some kind of involvement with labour unions and 0 refers to those who do not have any relationship with them. This variable is based on four items that ask respondents if they: 1) belong to a labour union; 2) took part in activities of a labour union; 3) donated to a labour union; and 4) volunteered in a labour union. Respondents who have answered "yes" in at least one of the four items are classified in the category 1 of the new variable, while the rest are classified in 0.

Religious membership. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different religious group: Roman Catholic; other religion; no religion.

Church attendance. Frequency of church attendance, with seven categories: never; only occasionally; only on special holidays; at least once a month; once a week; more than once a week; every day.

Region. I have created a dummy variable for each autonomous community.

Identification with region. Identification with region or autonomous community where respondent lives. Eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (do not identify at all) to 10 (identify strongly).

Identification with Spain. Eleven-point scale ranging from 0 (do not identify at all) to 10 (identify strongly).

2 Control variables at the respondent level

Party identification. I have created the variable using two survey questions: a first question about whether the respondent feels closest to a particular party, and a second question about the respondent's degree of closeness to that political party. The resulting variable has four categories: no party identification; not close to the party; quite close to the party; very close to the party. The variables is rescaled to range from 0 (no party identification) to 1 (very close to the party).

Ideological groups. Based on the eleven-point ideological self-placement scale, I have created five dummies, each of which refers to an ideological group: left (0-2); center-left (3–4); center (5); center-right (6–7); right (8–10).

Political interest. Degree of political interest, with four categories; 1) not at all interested, 2) hardly interested, 3) quite interested, and 4) very interested. The variable is rescaled to range from 0 (no at all interested) to 1 (very interested).

Sex. 1 means female and 0 means male.

Age. I have created five dummies, each of which refers to a different age group: 18–24; 25–34; 35–44; 45–54; 55 or more.

Education level. I have created three dummies, each of which refers to a different education group: lower secondary or less; upper secondary or 3 years Bachelor; 5 years Bachelor or higher.

3 Descriptive statistics

Table A1
Descriptive statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Respondent-out party level					
Party Affective Polarisation (PAP)	4794	5.409	3.304	−9	10
Voter Affective Polarisation (VAP)	4794	4.013	3.590	−10	10

(*continued on next page*)

Table A1 (*continued*)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
PAP-VAP	4794	1.396	2.758	−12.5	16
Ideological Distance	4794	4.244	2.491	0.067	9.714
Ideological Distance Squared	4794	24.210	23.743	0.004	94.367
Respondent level					
Social Sorting	1203	0.728	0.063	0.539	0.931
Party Identification	1203	0.462	0.362	0	1
Ideology: Left	1203	0.331	–	0	1
Ideology: Centre-Left	1203	0.252	–	0	1
Ideology: Centre	1203	0.148	–	0	1
Ideology: Centre-Right	1203	0.155	–	0	1
Ideology: Right	1203	0.114	–	0	1
Political Interest	1203	0.612	0.250	0	1
Female	1203	0.453	–	0	1
Age: 18-24	1203	0.076	–	0	1
Age: 25-34	1203	0.180	–	0	1
Age: 35-44	1203	0.224	–	0	1
Age: 45-54	1203	0.232	–	0	1
Age: 55 or more	1203	0.289	–	0	1
Education: Lower secondary or less	1203	0.140	–	0	1
Education: Upper secondary	1203	0.440	–	0	1
Education: Bachelor or more	1203	0.421	–	0	1

Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Note: The dash line refers to the average ideological self-placement of respondents.

Fig A1. Average ideological self-placement of respondents by partisan group.

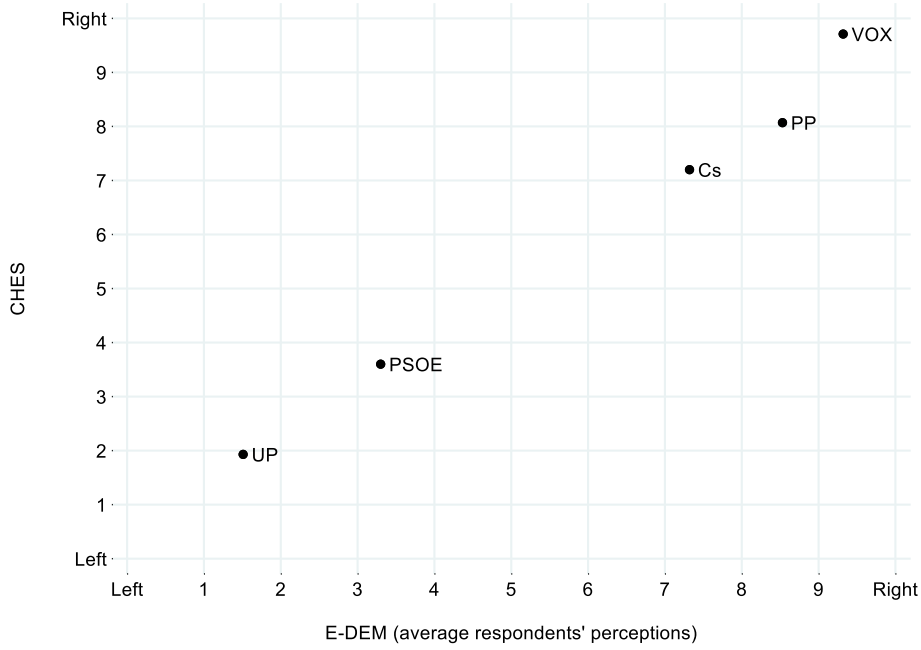
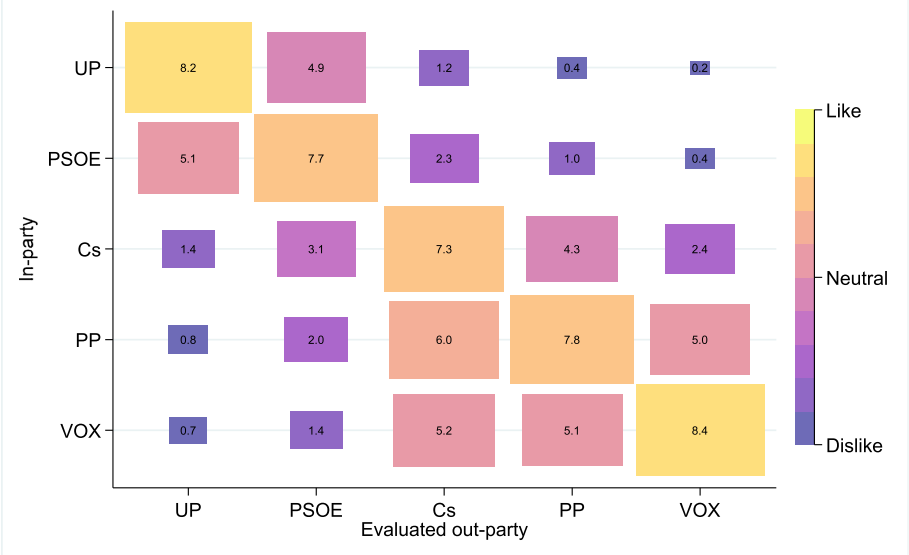
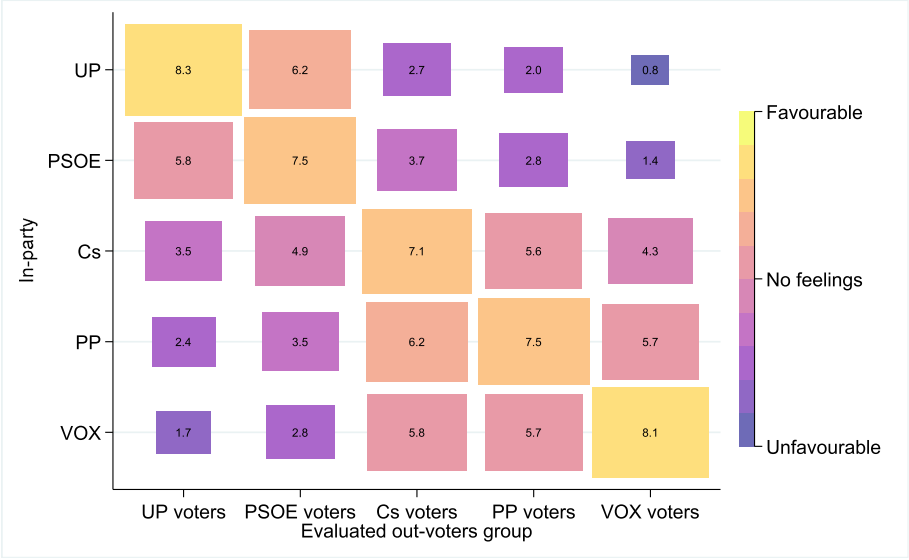


Fig A2. Ideological placement of the main Spanish parties according to the Chapen Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2019 and the E-DEM dataset (average respondents' perceptions).



Note: The size of the blocks is proportional to the like score.

Fig A3. Average like scores handed out by the partisans of each party (rows) towards their own and other parties (columns).



Note: The size of the blocks is proportional to the feelings score.

Fig A4. Average feelings scores handed out by the partisans of each party (rows) towards their own and other groups of voters (columns).

4 Main results

Table A2
Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	**1.114****	**0.579****	**0.536****
	(0.057)	**(0.057)**	**(0.045)**
Ideological Distance Squared	**−0.026****	**0.025****	**−0.051****
	(0.007)	**(0.007)**	**(0.005)**
PP	0.522**	0.099	0.423**
	(0.093)	(0.093)	(0.087)
PSOE	0.978**	0.320*	0.658**
	(0.160)	(0.152)	(0.116)
UP	0.944**	0.539**	0.405**
	(0.133)	(0.133)	(0.098)
Cs	0.384**	0.121	0.262**
	(0.124)	(0.116)	(0.100)
Constant	0.781**	0.765**	0.015
	(0.168)	(0.163)	(0.122)
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
R-squared (within)	0.485	0.450	0.063

Notes: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A3
Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Respondent - out-party level			
Ideological Distance	1.128**	0.592**	0.531**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.045)
Ideological Distance Squared	−0.029**	0.022**	−0.050**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Respondent level			
Social Sorting	**1.963+**	**5.638****	**−3.685****
	(1.042)	**(1.221)**	**(1.137)**
Party Identification	1.889**	1.677**	0.211
	(0.179)	(0.222)	(0.215)
Ideology: Left	−0.876**	−0.548*	−0.342

(*continued on next page*)

Table A3 (*continued*)

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
	(0.213)	(0.253)	(0.243)
Ideology: Center-left	−0.315+	−0.062	−0.257
	(0.180)	(0.232)	(0.233)
Ideology: Center-right	−0.482*	−0.103	−0.380
	(0.197)	(0.248)	(0.249)
Ideology: Right	−0.205	0.324	−0.536+
	(0.236)	(0.283)	(0.292)
Political Interest	−0.046	0.512+	−0.562+
	(0.255)	(0.308)	(0.337)
Female	−0.055	−0.175	0.120
	(0.115)	(0.143)	(0.139)
Age: 25-34	0.034	0.042	−0.010
	(0.233)	(0.306)	(0.308)
Age: 35-44	0.171	−0.223	0.392
	(0.233)	(0.305)	(0.312)
Age: 45-54	0.376+	0.354	0.021
	(0.227)	(0.299)	(0.308)
Age: 55 or more	0.393+	0.184	0.206
	(0.231)	(0.304)	(0.310)
Education: Upper Secondary	−0.421*	−0.454*	0.033
	(0.180)	(0.226)	(0.213)
Education: Bachelor or more	−0.299+	−0.221	−0.078
	(0.181)	(0.230)	(0.218)
PP	0.522**	0.091	0.430**
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.087)
PSOE	0.957**	0.300*	0.664**
	(0.154)	(0.149)	(0.114)
UP	0.908**	0.510**	0.410**
	(0.130)	(0.132)	(0.098)
Cs	0.367**	0.124	0.251*
	(0.119)	(0.114)	(0.099)
Constant	−0.914	−3.958**	3.054**
	(0.816)	(0.980)	(0.914)
Variance components			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.287**	4.449**	4.219**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	4.091**	3.979**	3.058**
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Log likelihood	−10883.969	−11133.136	−10631.516
Wald chi2(20)	3132.18**	2645.62**	264.50**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A4
Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

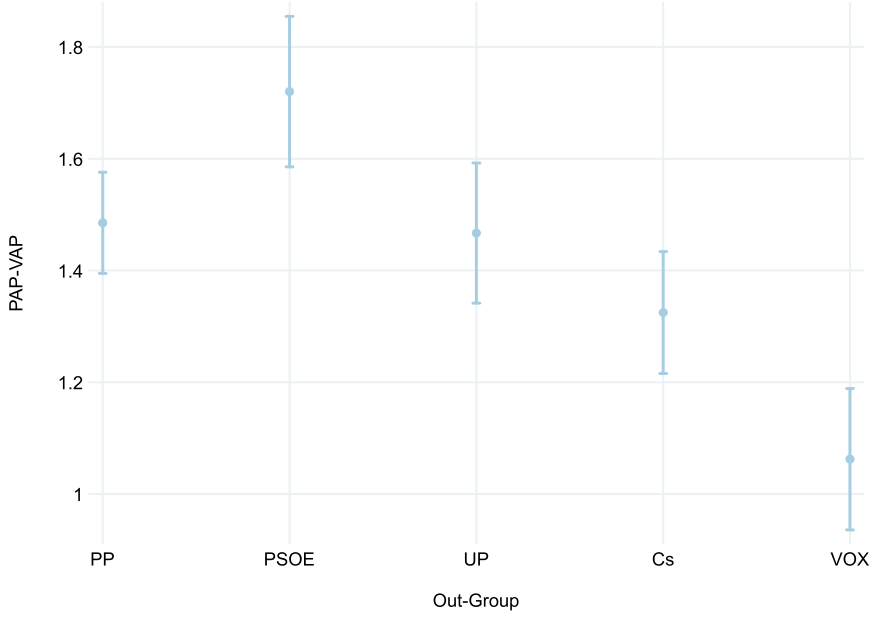
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance	0.290	−1.498*	1.761**
	(0.644)	(0.655)	(0.502)
Ideological Distance Squared	0.050	0.189**	−0.137**
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.053)
Social Sorting	−0.336	−1.264	0.809
	(2.148)	(2.109)	(1.609)
Ideol. Dist. X Social Sorting	**1.155**	**2.909****	**−1.721***
	(0.875)	**(0.892)**	**(0.680)**
Ideol. Dist. Sq. X Social Sorting	**−0.107**	**−0.232****	**0.123+**
	(0.086)	**(0.086)**	**(0.069)**
Party Identification	1.889**	1.683**	0.205
	(0.179)	(0.222)	(0.215)
Ideology: Left	−0.888**	−0.561*	−0.340
	(0.215)	(0.255)	(0.243)
Ideology: Center-left	−0.317+	−0.046	−0.274
	(0.181)	(0.232)	(0.233)
Ideology: Center-right	−0.484*	−0.113	−0.372
	(0.197)	(0.247)	(0.249)
Ideology: Right	−0.212	0.322	−0.541+
	(0.238)	(0.285)	(0.292)
Political Interest	−0.046	0.497	−0.547
	(0.256)	(0.307)	(0.336)
Female	−0.054	−0.169	0.115

(*continued on next page*)

Table A4 (*continued*)

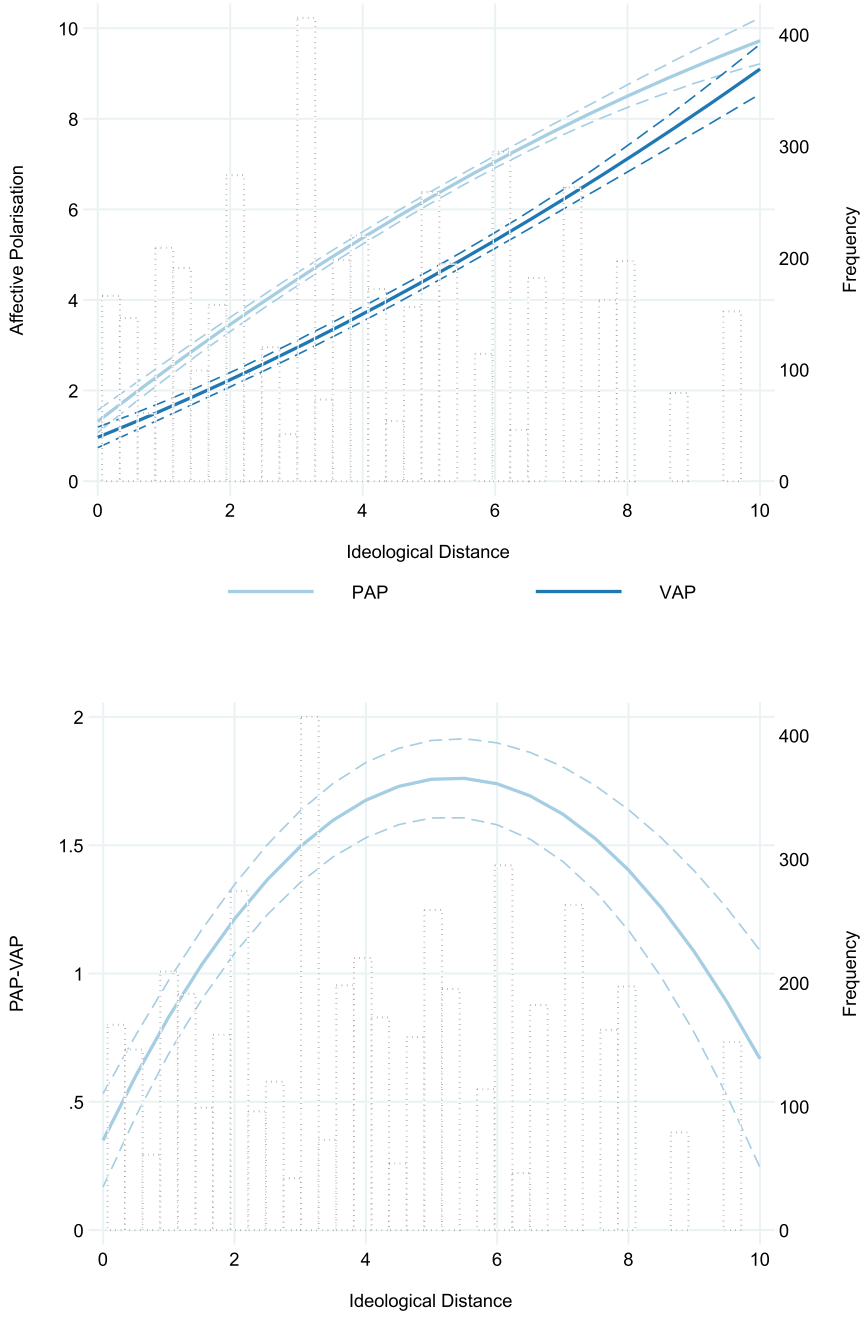
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
	(0.115)	(0.143)	(0.139)
Age: 25-34	0.039	0.059	−0.021
	(0.233)	(0.307)	(0.308)
Age: 35-44	0.175	−0.206	0.380
	(0.233)	(0.305)	(0.311)
Age: 45-54	0.380+	0.371	0.008
	(0.226)	(0.299)	(0.308)
Age: 55 or more	0.397+	0.202	0.193
	(0.231)	(0.304)	(0.310)
Education: Upper Secondary	−0.422*	−0.458*	0.036
	(0.180)	(0.226)	(0.213)
Education: Bachelor or more	−0.299+	−0.225	−0.075
	(0.181)	(0.229)	(0.218)
PP	0.515**	0.073	0.440**
	(0.089)	(0.090)	(0.086)
PSOE	0.975**	0.373*	0.610**
	(0.159)	(0.154)	(0.114)
UP	0.922**	0.564**	0.372**
	(0.134)	(0.136)	(0.099)
Cs	0.352**	0.084	0.276**
	(0.119)	(0.113)	(0.099)
Constant	0.739	0.959	−0.133
	(1.564)	(1.589)	(1.238)
Variance components			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.289**	4.452**	4.212**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	4.088**	3.955**	3.089**
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Log likelihood	−10882.624	−11121.861	−10625.104
Wald chi2(22)	3247.84**	2933.68**	272.37**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 3 in Table A2.

Fig A5. Within-respondent predicted difference between party affective polarisation and voter affective polarisation (PAP-VAP) by evaluated out-party.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A3.

Fig A6. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance between respondents and out-parties. Linear random intercept models.

5 Robustness checks and extensions

A) Alternative specification of ideological distance (ordinal variable)

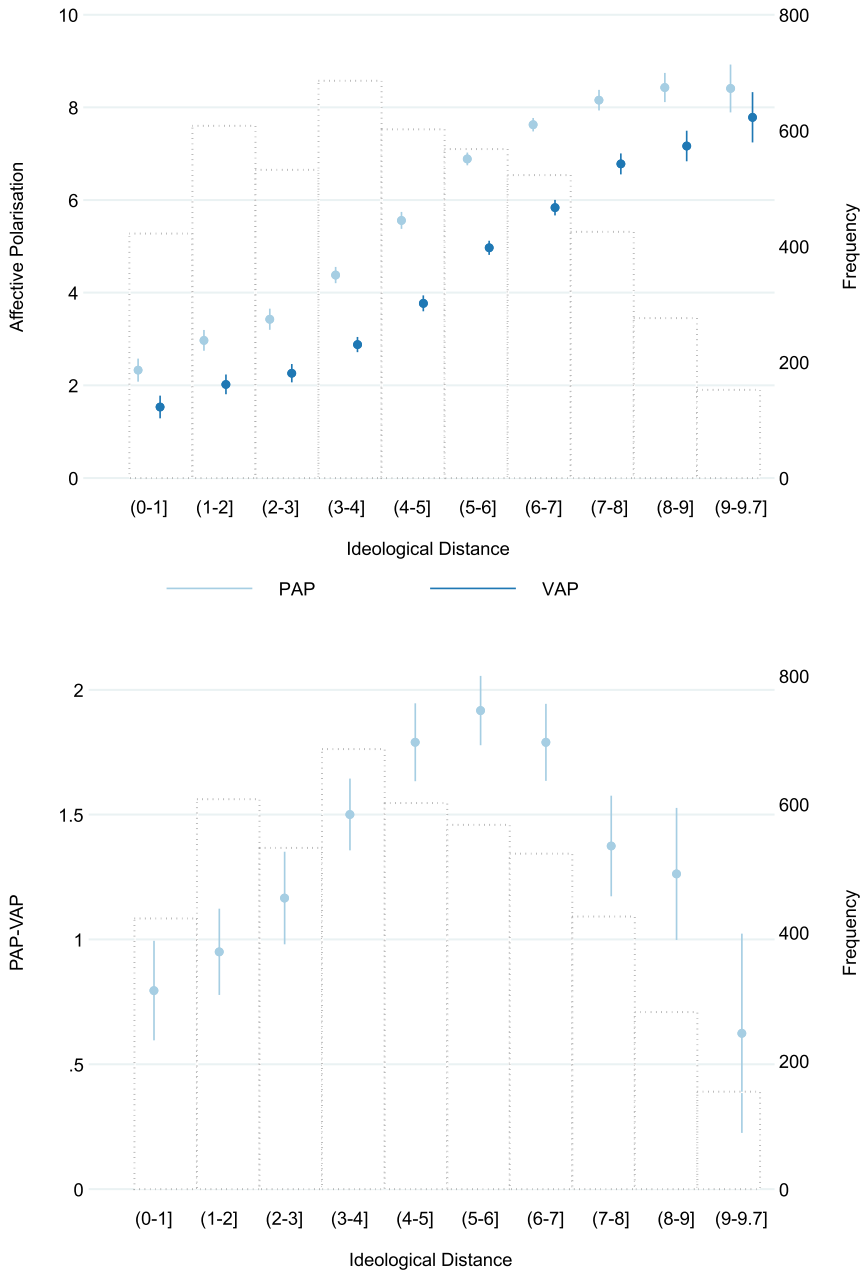
Table A5

Linear regression models with respondent fixed effects. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP - VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Ideological Distance: (1–2]	**0.642****	**0.487****	**0.155**
	(0.161)	**(0.158)**	**(0.133)**
Ideological Distance: (2–3]	**1.098****	**0.728****	**0.370****
	(0.172)	**(0.158)**	**(0.139)**
Ideological Distance: (3–4]	**2.053****	**1.347****	**0.705****
	(0.163)	**(0.156)**	**(0.133)**
Ideological Distance: (4–5]	**3.232****	**2.237****	**0.994****
	(0.161)	**(0.156)**	**(0.130)**
Ideological Distance: (5–6]	**4.559****	**3.438****	**1.121****
	(0.156)	**(0.160)**	**(0.127)**
Ideological Distance: (6–7]	**5.298****	**4.304****	**0.994****
	(0.162)	**(0.168)**	**(0.140)**
Ideological Distance: (7–8]	**5.827****	**5.248****	**0.579****
	(0.191)	**(0.191)**	**(0.160)**
Ideological Distance: (8–9]	**6.101****	**5.633****	**0.467***
	(0.231)	**(0.232)**	**(0.186)**
Ideological Distance: (9–9.7]	**6.081****	**6.252****	**−0.171**
	(0.320)	**(0.329)**	**(0.248)**
PP	−0.103	−0.500**	0.396**
	(0.081)	(0.082)	(0.082)
PSOE	0.636**	−0.032	0.668**
	(0.150)	(0.142)	(0.111)
UP	0.348**	−0.020	0.368**
	(0.122)	(0.122)	(0.092)
Cs	−0.146	−0.395**	0.250**
	(0.111)	(0.104)	(0.095)
Constant	2.207**	1.732**	0.475**
	(0.167)	(0.162)	(0.129)
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
R-squared (within)	0.494	0.458	0.063

Notes: Respondent fixed effects included. Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$.

Source: E-DEM, third wave.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A5.

Fig A7. Within-respondent predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by ideological distance categories.

B) Social sorting: territorial dimension vs. other dimensions

Table A6
Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Respondent - out-party level			
Ideological Distance	1.127**	0.591**	0.532**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.045)
Ideological Distance Squared	−0.029**	0.022**	−0.050**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Respondent level			
Social Sorting (territorial)	**1.987+**	**5.903****	**−3.924****
	(1.064)	**(1.218)**	**(1.086)**

(*continued on next page*)

Table A6 (*continued*)

VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Party Identification	1.897**	1.698**	0.197
	(0.180)	(0.222)	(0.215)
Ideology: Left	−0.874**	−0.548*	−0.339
	(0.212)	(0.254)	(0.243)
Ideology: Center-left	−0.321+	−0.085	−0.240
	(0.180)	(0.232)	(0.233)
Ideology: Center-right	−0.472*	−0.073	−0.401
	(0.197)	(0.246)	(0.249)
Ideology: Right	−0.187	0.381	−0.575*
	(0.238)	(0.284)	(0.293)
Political Interest	−0.061	0.469	−0.533
	(0.255)	(0.310)	(0.337)
Female	−0.050	−0.160	0.110
	(0.115)	(0.143)	(0.139)
Age: 25-34	0.035	0.047	−0.014
	(0.234)	(0.307)	(0.306)
Age: 35-44	0.154	−0.266	0.419
	(0.232)	(0.304)	(0.310)
Age: 45-54	0.368	0.332	0.034
	(0.226)	(0.298)	(0.306)
Age: 55 or more	0.386+	0.169	0.215
	(0.231)	(0.304)	(0.309)
Education: Upper Secondary	−0.421*	−0.453*	0.033
	(0.180)	(0.226)	(0.212)
Education: Bachelor or more	−0.296	−0.213	−0.083
	(0.181)	(0.229)	(0.217)
PP	0.522**	0.091	0.430**
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.087)
PSOE	0.958**	0.301*	0.663**
	(0.154)	(0.149)	(0.114)
UP	0.908**	0.512**	0.410**
	(0.130)	(0.132)	(0.098)
Cs	0.368**	0.126	0.250*
	(0.119)	(0.114)	(0.099)
Constant	−0.910	−4.086**	3.185**
	(0.811)	(0.957)	(0.869)
Variance components			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.287**	4.439**	4.210**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	4.091**	3.979**	3.099**
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Log likelihood	−10883.916	−11132.045	−10630.805
Wald chi2(20)	3118.35**	2611.43**	263.85**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05, + p < 0.1.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.

Table A7
Linear random intercept models. Party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP as dependent variables

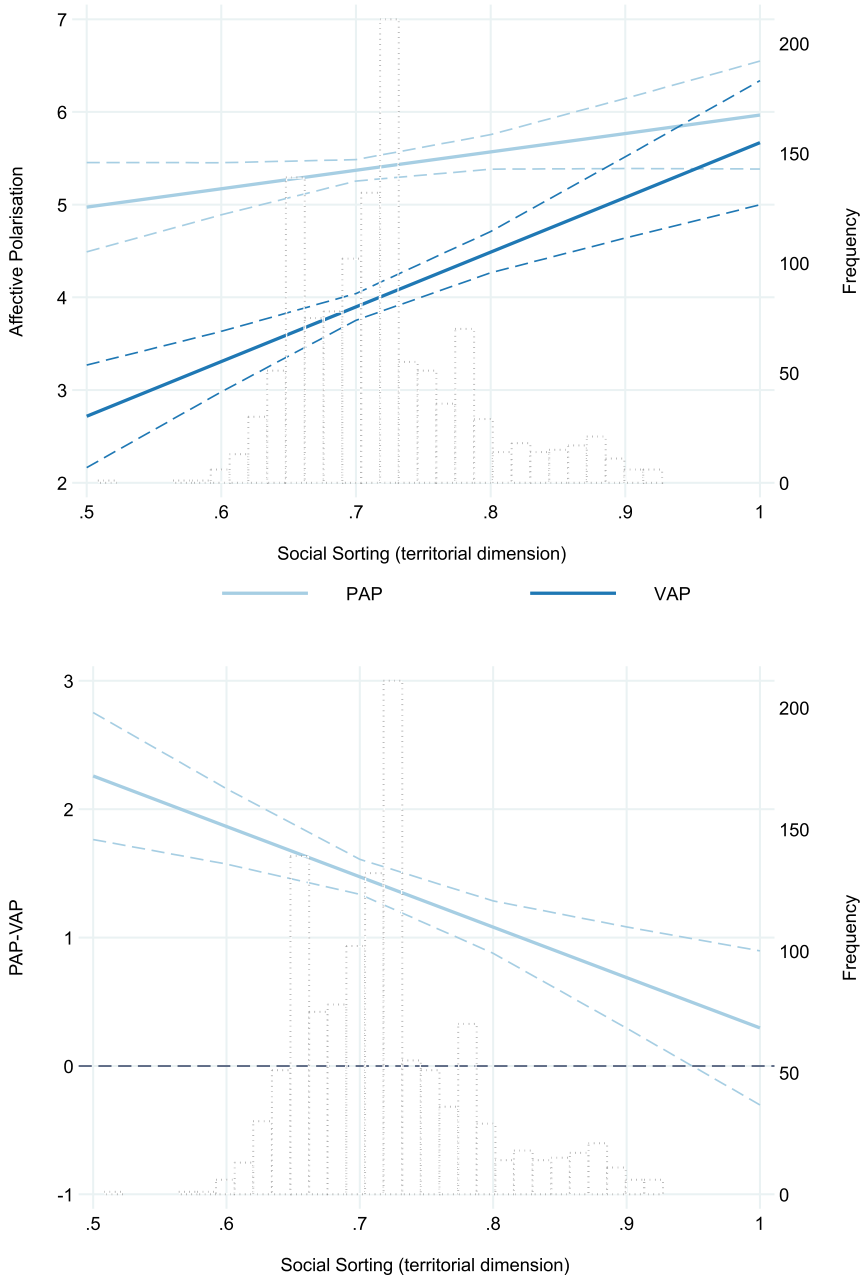
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Respondent - out-party level			
Ideological Distance	1.127**	0.593**	0.531**
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.045)
Ideological Distance Squared	−0.029**	0.022**	−0.050**
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.005)
Respondent level			
Social Sorting (non-territorial)	**2.018**	**3.273+**	**−1.253**
	(1.400)	**(1.859)**	**(1.770)**
Party Identification	1.888**	1.690**	0.197
	(0.179)	(0.221)	(0.215)
Ideology: Left	−0.876**	−0.436+	−0.454+
	(0.218)	(0.259)	(0.255)
Ideology: Center-left	−0.328+	−0.033	−0.299
	(0.183)	(0.235)	(0.237)
Ideology: Center-right	−0.493*	−0.144	−0.350
	(0.198)	(0.247)	(0.249)
Ideology: Right	−0.220	0.248	−0.475
	(0.235)	(0.283)	(0.290)
Political Interest	−0.025	0.554+	−0.581+
	(0.254)	(0.309)	(0.338)

(*continued on next page*)

Table A7 (*continued*)

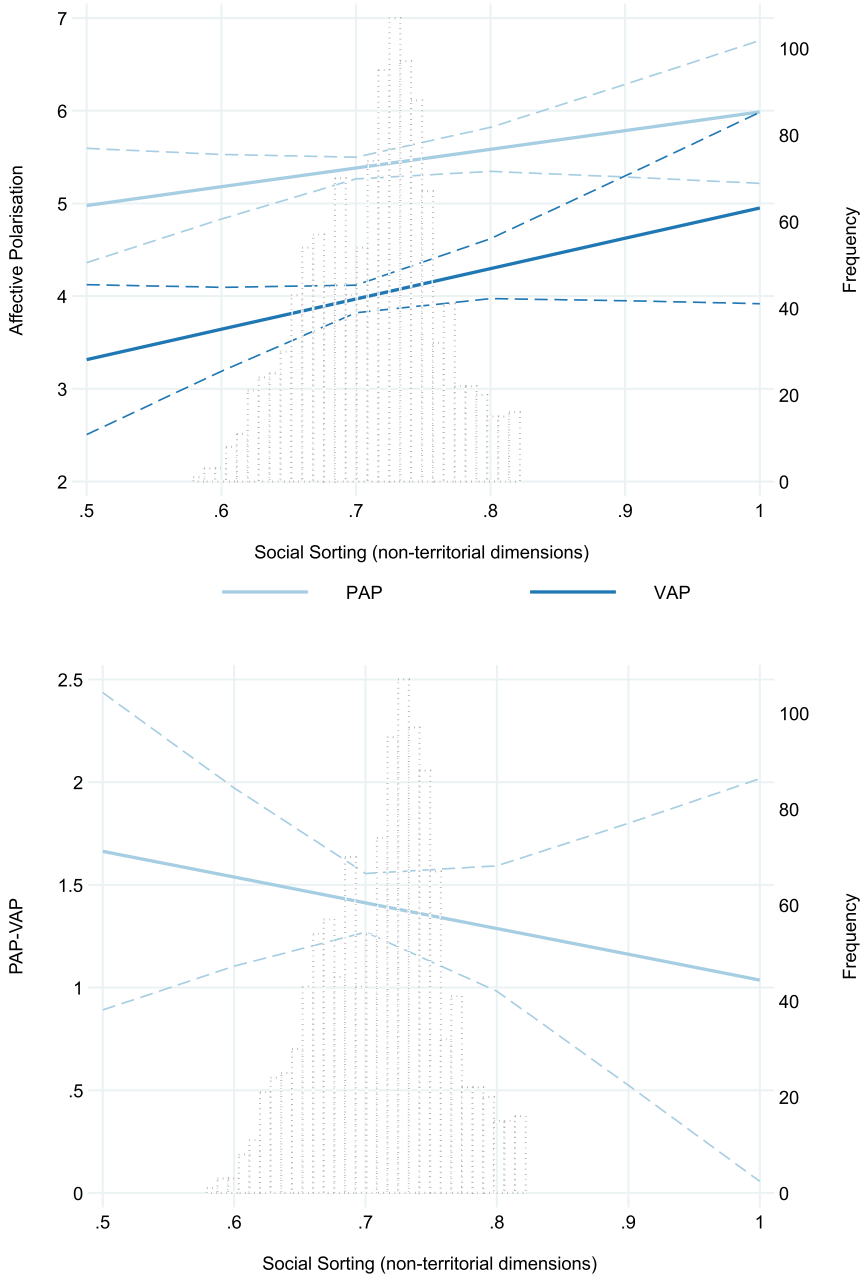
VARIABLES	M1: PAP	M2: VAP	M3: PAP-VAP
Female	−0.060	−0.177	0.117
	(0.116)	(0.144)	(0.140)
Age: 25-34	0.035	0.000	0.033
	(0.233)	(0.305)	(0.306)
Age: 35-44	0.177	−0.280	0.457
	(0.234)	(0.306)	(0.310)
Age: 45-54	0.380+	0.304	0.075
	(0.227)	(0.299)	(0.307)
Age: 55 or more	0.398+	0.130	0.266
	(0.232)	(0.304)	(0.307)
Education: Upper Secondary	−0.418*	−0.446+	0.028
	(0.180)	(0.227)	(0.213)
Education: Bachelor or more	−0.303+	−0.221	−0.082
	(0.181)	(0.231)	(0.219)
PP	0.523**	0.092	0.429**
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.087)
PSOE	0.961**	0.305*	0.662**
	(0.154)	(0.149)	(0.114)
UP	0.905**	0.503**	0.416**
	(0.130)	(0.132)	(0.098)
Cs	0.366**	0.123	0.252*
	(0.119)	(0.114)	(0.099)
Constant	−0.935	−2.210	1.278
	(1.043)	(1.402)	(1.314)
Variance components			
Random intercept b/w respondents	2.294**	4.536**	4.257**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	4.091**	3.979**	3.099**
Number of respondents	1203	1203	1203
Number of respondent - out-party	4794	4794	4794
Log likelihood	−10885.114	−11142.72	−10636.556
Wald chi2(20)	3139.69**	2578.19**	257.85**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A6.

Fig A8. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting (territorial dimension).



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Models 1, 2 and 3 in Table A7.

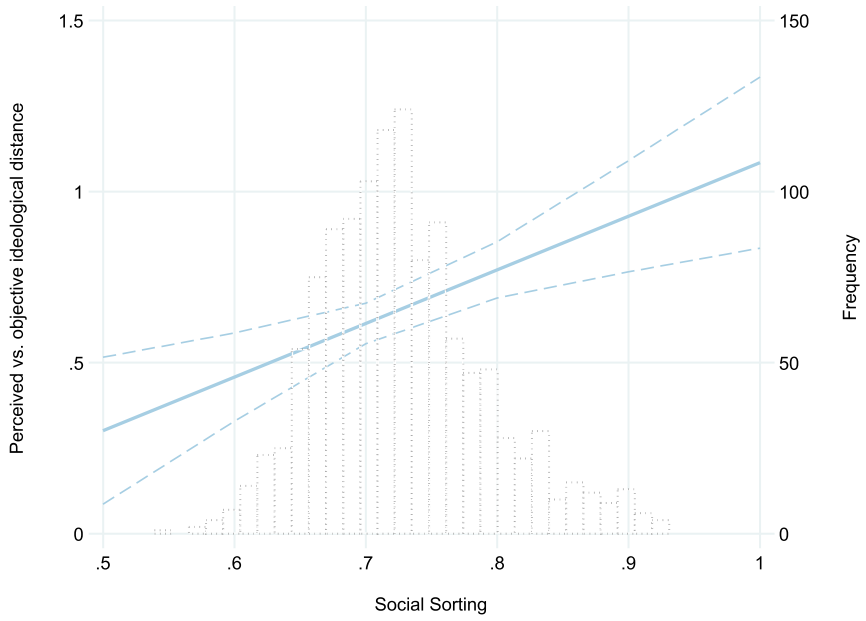
Fig A9. Predicted levels of party affective polarisation (PAP), voter affective polarisation (VAP) and PAP-VAP, by social sorting (non-territorial dimensions).

B) Perceived vs. objective ideological distance

Table A8
Linear random intercept model. Difference between perceived and objective ideological distance as dependent variable.

VARIABLES	M1
Respondent level	
Social Sorting	**1.567****
	(0.462)
Party Identification	0.169+
	(0.096)
Ideology: Left	0.255*
	(0.104)
Ideology: Center-left	0.078
	(0.092)
Ideology: Center-right	0.027
	(0.102)
Ideology: Right	0.469**
	(0.132)
Political Interest	−0.020
	(0.135)
Female	0.015
	(0.058)
Age: 25-34	0.227
	(0.145)
Age: 35-44	0.402**
	(0.142)
Age: 45-54	0.424**
	(0.139)
Age: 55 or more	0.475**
	(0.138)
Education: Upper Secondary	−0.142
	(0.095)
Education: Bachelor or more	−0.148
	(0.097)
PP	0.751**
	(0.045)
PSOE	0.993**
	(0.070)
UP	0.903**
	(0.065)
Cs	0.822**
	(0.057)
Constant	−1.630**
	(0.392)
Variance components	
Random intercept b/w respondents	0.392**
Random intercept b/w respondent - out-party	1.819**
Number of respondents	1194
Number of respondent - out-party	4642
Log likelihood	−8337.113
Wald chi2(18)	530.68**

Notes: Standard errors are clustered by respondent. Cells report coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.1$.
Source: E-DEM, third wave.



Notes: 95% confidence intervals. Based on Model 1 in Table A8.

Fig A10. Perceived vs. objective ideological distance, by social sorting.

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